DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 242 401 PS 014 141

TITLE Nebraska Schools: The Report of the Governor's Task Force on Excellence in Education.
INSTITUTION Nebraska State Office of the Governor, Lincoln.
PUB DATE 30 Sep 83
NOTE 38p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Development; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Objectives; *Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Graduation Requirements; School Community Relationship; *State Programs; Teacher Education; Teacher Evaluation; Teacher Salaries; Teacher Selection
IDENTIFIERS *Nebraska

ABSTRACT

This document presents the findings of the Governor of Nebraska's task force on excellence in education. Initially, a transmittal letter states the charges, findings, and recommendations of the task force. Section 1 of the report presents a preamble and 12 findings and premises. Section 2 contains recommendations in four categories: (1) curriculum and standards; (2) teaching, which includes teacher preparation, pay, retention, and due process; (3) time and learning environment; and (4) public support, funding, and governance. Section 3, an executive summary, concludes the report. Appended are a list of task force members, suggested competencies, background information on Nebraska schools, and a bibliography. (BJD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED242401

NEBRASKA SCHOOLS:

The Report of the Governor's Task Force on Excellence in Education

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Governor's Office
State of Nebraska
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Lincoln, Nebraska

September 30, 1983

PS 014141

The Report of the Governor's Task Force on Excellence in Education

September 30, 1983

Letter of Transmittal

September 30, 1983

The Honorable Robert Kerrey
Governor of Nebraska
State Capitol
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509

Dear Governor Kerrey:

In June of 1983 you created the Governor's Task Force on Excellence in Education and charged it to:

1) study the current status of education in Nebraska, especially at the high school level;
2) assess how certain national reports on education apply to Nebraska schools; and
3) determine the kind of education that can and should be provided for all of Nebraska's children.

The Task Force studied statistical data, analyzed various reports, and held a series of Town Hall meetings across the State to elicit citizen input. Based on this open and thorough process, I am proud to be able to present our findings and recommendations to you.

Essentially, the Task Force found that Nebraska's schools are sound, but not without room for improvement. We have attempted to avoid getting embroiled in traditional battles, and have, instead, attempted to address all issues with an eye to the future and with an emphasis on excellence in education.

It is our hope that the makers of educational policy in Nebraska will examine this report with a "jeweler's eye," seeking not to pass the responsibility for improvements on to others, but rather to look for opportunities to be involved in implementing these recommendations. These recommendations may not be all-inclusive, but we hope they will serve as a catalyst.

We are convinced that there is no greater challenge facing Nebraska than that of providing our citizens with a comprehensive and high-quality education. We commend you for identifying education as a top priority, and thank you for the opportunity to address the crucial issues and challenges facing our schools.

Sincerely,

Brenda J Warren

Brenda Warren
Chair

The Report of the Governor's Task Force on Excellence in Education

September 30, 1983

Table of Contents

Letter of Transmittal i

Findings and Premises 1

Recommendations 4
- Curriculum and Standards 4
- Teaching 6
- Time and Learning Environment 9
- Public Support, Funding, and Governance 10

Executive Summary 12

Appendices

Appendix A
- Task Force Members 15

Appendix B
- Suggested Competencies 17

Appendix C
- Background Information on Nebraska Schools ... 19
  - School Enrollment 19
  - Graduation Requirements 20
  - Student Performance 22
  - Teachers 24
  - School Organization 25
  - School Finances 29

Appendix D
- For Further Reading 30

FINDINGS AND PREMISES

PREAMBLE

No other nation expects as much of its schools as does the United States. Schools in America are challenged to educate "all of the children of all of the people," regardless of their abilities. Schools are expected to be the "Great Equalizer" of American society, empowering all people to attain a place in society based on their abilities rather than on the circumstances of their birth. Schools are expected to reflect society's values and transmit our multicultural heritage. They are expected to be on the cutting edge of change, preparing students for living in a rapidly changing, technological, pluralistic, and ethnically diverse society as well as a worldwide community. Moreover, schools are expected to be more than just a place of academic learning, attending to students' physical, emotional, ethical, and social development as well. Not surprisingly, the educational system is often criticized by those who believe strongly that a particular school mission is paramount, as well as by those who demand that excellence be achieved immediately in all areas.

The Task Force believes the state and its school districts should be firmly committed to the ideal of excellence in meeting the educational needs of all of Nebraska's children. The importance of education to the economic and social well-being of the state and its citizens cannot be overemphasized.

- **Nebraska elementary and secondary schools have a clear record of success.** This record is documented by high literacy rates, high graduation rates, above average performance by Nebraska students on nationally standardized tests, and the high percentage of graduates who enter and are successful in postsecondary education. The educational system's contribution is also reflected in the productivity of Nebraska's labor force. Nebraskans take pride in their schools. The quality of Nebraska education is a tribute to the commitment of Nebraska's teachers, students, administrators, and support staff at all levels, school board members and other elected officials; parents; and the community at large.

- **Current trends indicate the need for an even better education to prepare citizens to meet the demands of the future.** In this increasingly global and technological "Information Society" the strength of the nation and Nebraska will depend even more on the knowledge, skills and moral fiber of our citizens. What has served us well in the past may not be adequate in the future. In the past our country's physical resources contributed heavily to our success. In the future we will succeed to the degree that we can develop our human resources.

- **Our society requires that a high school graduate have a comprehensive education.** People in virtually all walks of life are expected to have the following: analytic, expressive, communicative, and computational skills, an appreciation for the responsibilities of citizenship; an understanding of human behavior and the scope of the human experience; an ability to understand and respond to change, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

- **There is strong agreement that Nebraska schools must be dedicated to the education of all children.** The expansion of the missions and purposes of education over the past several decades in response to societal demands and expectations, however, has created confusion as to what the priorities for the schools should be. This confusion is evident in differing perspective on the role of student activities programs, the place of vocational education in the curriculum, the number and content of electives students should be allowed to take, and the extent of support for programs to meet the needs of non-English-speaking, minority, handicapped, gifted and economically disadvantaged students.

- **Nebraska high schools have offerings in the core curriculum areas of English, social studies, mathematics and science which are generally consistent with those identified in the National Commission on Excellence in Education's report A Nation at Risk.** The availability of offerings in foreign languages and computer education, however, is comparatively limited. The content of all courses and the extent to which they are required for graduation are locally determined and consequently vary considerably from district to district.

  As for what constitutes the "new basics," many Nebraskans do not consider the core curriculum identified in *A Nation at Risk* to be all-inclusive and feel that there are other areas of equal importance. The fine arts, instruction in social responsibilities, health education, and vocational education are important means of achieving academic excellence and developing students' unique talents.

- **In some settings there are inadequate challenges and rigor to develop students' intellectual abilities.** It is essential that core curricular areas stimulate capacities to think and learn. Study and thinking skills must also be taught as a regular part of the curriculum.

  Unfortunately, students are often allowed to opt out of more rigorous courses in favor of less challenging ones. One reason for exercising this option seems to be the desire of students to maintain a high grade-point average. In some cases scheduling problems prohibit students from enrolling in courses they would like to take. High school students may complete their requirements for graduation early in their senior year, often becoming part-time students and forsaking other educational opportunities offered by the schools.

  Schools are charged with educating all children, regardless of their abilities. Therefore school should be conducted so that all students can achieve to their maximum potential. This necessitates individualized instruction, varied teaching strategies, flexible scheduling, guidance counseling, and locally developed curricular offerings that meet the diverse needs and talents of students.

- **A major concern regarding instruction is the limited amount of student learning time in the school day.** Interruptions in the school day for extracurricular activities and administrative procedures, together with constraints imposed by teaching methods, scheduling, class size, and instructional materials, impact on student learning time. Many believe that more attention needs to be given to the effective use of instructional time in the classroom and that this should be accomplished before the length of the school day or year is increased.

- **There are serious obstacles to maintaining and improving the size and quality of the teacher corps.** Low pay, the lack of career ladders and unattractive retirement benefits have led to disillusionment in teacher ranks and continue to work against recruiting and retaining exceptional teachers. The decline in the numbers and abilities of persons wishing to enter teacher education also reflects opportunities in other fields for women who previously entered teaching in large numbers. Competition with higher paying and more prestigious careers has further limited the pool of potential teachers. Shortages of qualified teachers are now evident in certain areas with more shortages predicted for the future. Compounding these trends is a continuing decline in public respect for teaching as a profession.

  The programs in the teacher education institutions of the state vary considerably in terms of curriculum requirements and expectations for students. In addition there is a perception that teacher training programs are not challenging enough to produce the most able teachers.

Continuing education programs for teachers are of uncertain quality. In fact, a significant weakness in teacher education is in what is provided for the teacher after initial certification. There is no systematic plan for the continuing development of teachers throughout their careers. Graduate programs and offerings are of inconsistent quality and in-service programs are short-term and limited in intensity. Teachers, moreover, are generally expected to pay for the costs of their own continuing education and to pursue such education on after-work time, conditions not found in most other occupations. Finally, beginning teachers receive little help in the critical early years of on-the-job development.

- **The current organization and character of Nebraska's educational system reveal both strengths and weaknesses for meeting the challenge of excellence in education.** Nebraskans want to continue their tradition of strong local control which has produced citizen commitment for meeting community needs and strong identification with schools. Such local control, however, has also resulted in a disparity of resources available to schools which leads to inequities in educational opportunities. Furthermore, a state educational system with approximately 1,000 school districts and six different classes of districts—each with its own specific legislation—is inefficient in the use of financial and human resources.

  Nebraskans historically have relied heavily on the property tax to support elementary and secondary education. Currently, there is considerable support in Nebraska for providing more funding for education, but only through a broadened tax base. In fact, state tax policy and the very low level of state financial aid to public schools pose serious obstacles to the improvement of education on the local level. The state offers few incentives to schools for broadening course offerings, strengthening curricula, providing continuing education to teachers, or making other significant improvements. In sum, at this critical juncture there is a necessity for greater effort on the part of the state to fulfill its Constitutional charge to provide for the education of all children.[1]

- **To improve the quality of education, schools will need an even broader base of community support.** Many parents and community members feel insufficiently informed about their schools and find it difficult to participate in the educational process. Significant changes in family structure and routine have altered the pattern of parental involvement in individual students' learning and in the operation of the schools. The result has been less direct contact and commitment to the local school, despite the efforts of community involvement programs. Ultimately, educators, students, parents, and the community at large must share the responsibility for insuring that a sound and up-to-date education is not only available but also fully conveyed to all children.

- **Nebraskans recognize the need for excellence in education and support improvement.** They are willing to accept the challenge to invest in the future of their country and their state.

- **A unique opportunity to make needed changes is at hand.** Public concern for quality in education is high, but other issues may soon replace education as a top priority. From this year's kindergarten students will come the high school class of 1996 and the college class of the year 2000. **The time to improve education is now.**

---

[1]Art. VII, Sec. 1, *Constitution of the State of Nebraska.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS

The Task Force believes that the goals of elementary and secondary education are to prepare students for lifelong learning and personal development, responsible citizenship, and postsecondary education and/or entry into the work force. Curriculum and standards in Nebraska's schools should be revised to reflect increased attention to academic rigor and excellence. The Task Force also believes that a kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) school system, organized in local districts, is the best vehicle for delivering a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum. Progression through the K-12 curriculum should be based on proficiency in the various areas of knowledge, especially communication, computation, and critical and creative thinking skills. The scope and sequence of education should reflect careful and logical planning.

In the area of curriculum and standards, the Task Force recommends the following:

1. **The Nebraska Department of Education should revise accreditation standards for Nebraska schools to include curriculum improvements.** A single set of higher standards than currently exists should apply to all Nebraska schools. In addition, Nebraska high schools should offer the following core curriculum or the equivalent thereof:

   4 years English
   4 years mathematics
   4 years social studies
   2 years foreign language
   3 years science (including at least one each of biological and physical sciences)
   4 years fine/performing arts
   3 years personal health/fitness
   3 years career/vocational education
   2 years computer education

2. **The state should establish minimum statewide graduation requirements.** The minimums are not to be construed as maximums. Local school districts are strongly encouraged to add to the requirements to reflect their own high standards of excellence. In establishing graduation requirements attention should be given primarily to student outcomes in knowledge and skills rather than time spent in courses. In particular, the Task Force endorses the general competencies included in *A Nation at Risk* for English, mathematics, science, social studies, computer science, and foreign languages *as guidelines toward the development of outcome-based requirements.*[2]

3. **The graduation requirements to be established by the state should be inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:**[3]

   4 years English/language arts
   3 years mathematics/computer education
   3 years social studies
   2 years foreign language and/or career/vocational education
   2 years science (including at least one year biological and one year physical sciences)
   2 years fine/performing arts
   1.5 years personal health/fitness

[2]See Appendix B.

[3]The requirements do not apply to those students whose individualized education plans (IEP) provide other direction.

4. **The admissions criteria for Nebraska's postsecondary institutions should continue to be a determining factor in graduation requirements for college-bound students.** Current efforts of Nebraska's public and private colleges and universities to raise their admissions standards are endorsed.

5. **School districts should make early identification of gifted and talented students and those with learning disabilities and provide for their needs.** Appropriate teaching strategies must be matched to the unique learning styles of the learning disabled. Both acceleration and enrichment opportunities must be provided for the gifted and talented.[4]

6. **Parents and the community should encourage students to make their school work full-time and seriously pursued.**

7. **School districts should develop ways to recognize and reward students for their academic achievement with the goal of encouraging all students to develop their intellectual abilities more fully.**

8. **School districts should initiate and/or intensify efforts to identify and counsel potential high school dropouts.**

---

[4](a) *Acceleration*—progression through a discipline based on mastery of concepts and skills rather than on the time needed for mastery.

(b) *Enrichment*—experiences and activities *different* from the standard curriculum, rather than *more* of the same.

TEACHING

The Task Force believes that the essential ingredients of quality teaching are the teacher's knowledge of the subject matter, the teacher's ability to interact with and relate to students, and the teacher's ability to use materials and techniques appropriate to the learning needs of students. Those ingredients can only be assured through the availability of talented, knowledgeable, motivated and responsive teachers.

The most effective way to prevent marginal or incompetent candidates from entering the teaching profession is to screen them out before they are granted an initial teaching certificate. Continuing contract laws (tenure), which protect the due process rights of teachers, should not stand in the way of dismissing ineffective teachers.

To support excellence in teaching, therefore, concurrent improvements will be required in preparation programs, certification standards, continuing education and professional development opportunities, pay, retirement benefits, evaluation standards and procedures, and teacher status. In addition, opportunities for advancement should be provided for teachers without taking them out of the classroom.

The following recommendations are designed to enhance the quality of teaching in Nebraska's classrooms:

Teacher Preparation

1. **The State Board of Education should encourage all Nebraska institutions providing teacher training to establish a more rigorous set of standards for admission and retention.** Such criteria should include screening procedures to ensure that teacher education candidates possess both appropriate aptitude for and scholarship in "the art and science of teaching."

2. **The Nebraska Department of Education should establish ways and means of assessing the subject matter knowledge, general education knowledge, and competence for teaching of candidates for teacher certification.**

3. **Teacher training institutions should provide practical classroom experiences for prospective teachers early and regularly throughout their preparatory programs.**

4. **Certification standards and appropriate compensation should be established for elementary and secondary teachers who supervise student teachers.**

5. **Substantial incentives such as loans with forgiveness clauses and scholarships should be developed to attract the best possible persons into teaching, especially in areas of teacher shortages.** Such incentives should be provided through public and private sources.

6. **A reliable data base for predicting areas of teacher shortages and surplus in the future should be developed and used.** The teacher training institutions should actively counsel students so as to match the areas of present and future teacher shortages and surplus to the supply of teachers.

Staff Development/Career Enrichment

7. **The Nebraska Department of Education should monitor and approve graduate programs in teacher training institutions.** Certification standards should require that applicants for a "Professional Teaching Certificate" must be graduates of an approved Nebraska graduate program or meet reciprocity standards if the applicant graduated from a program outside Nebraska.

8. **The Nebraska Department of Education should develop a program designed to assist first-year teachers.** The program should provide a team of professionals to assist the new teacher and to determine whether he or she should be recommended for further certification. The state should encourage the implementation of such a program by providing state funding as an incentive to school districts for their participation.

9. **The state should provide funds for professional development to encourage comprehensive in-service and continuing education activities for teachers in current service.** The overall program should offer a wide range of effective, easily accessible, and professionally developed component programs that are delivered in the most cost-effective way possible. It should include such areas as:

   a. the latest methods for enabling teachers to better impart knowledge to all students based on their individual needs and learning styles;
   b. current developments in teachers' subject matter areas;
   c. the application of new technologies.

   Further, such a program should be included in regulations for certification renewal.

10. **To encourage further professional development, local boards of education should provide teachers with sabbaticals and other leaves of absence designed to provide insight and experience which can be used in the classroom setting upon their return.** School boards and teacher associations should reduce obstacles for transfers among school districts and should provide opportunities for early retirement to maintain fresh and enthusiastic attitudes in all instructional settings.

11. **The state should significantly improve the teacher retirement system.**

Teacher Pay

12. **Starting and career salaries for teachers in Nebraska must be increased to become competitive with salaries in other careers requiring a baccalaureate degree, with a goal of attracting highly capable people into the teaching profession.**

13. **The state should provide incentives to local school districts to establish ten and eleven-month contracts for teachers.** Extended contracts for teachers should be for the purpose(s) of providing remediation and enrichment opportunities for students, curriculum revision and review, and/or staff development.

14. **A master teacher rank with corresponding compensation should be established based on standards of experience and exemplary teaching which are set by the**

Nebraska Department of Education and verified through evaluations by the local school district. Master teachers, under the direction and supervision of the school administrator, should have *one or two* of the following responsibilities in addition to those of other teachers:

a. Provide instructional and curriculum leadership within their schools with authority to present proposals to the local board of education.
b. Conduct staff development programs, especially for beginning teachers.
c. Serve on the team of professionals to assist and evaluate beginning teachers.
d. Conduct instructional programs to meet special needs of students.
e. Work with students with special learning needs.
f. Serve as department and area chairs and/or team leaders.
g. Develop and recommend selection of instructional materials.
h. Participate in research and development projects aimed at program improvement.
i. Participate in other innovative activities developed by school districts to improve instruction and enhance the school environment.

Teacher Retention and Due Process

15. **Tenure requirements should be reviewed to determine if more rigorous standards for the granting of tenure and the determining of continuing competence can be designed.**

16. **Fair and reliable procedures for the evaluation of teachers must be developed and used to enable boards of education to recognize and reward those teachers who are most able, to help those who can improve, and to remove from the profession those who are not competent.**

17. **In-service education programs should be established for school administrators to enable them to develop and improve their evaluation skills.** In addition, school administrators should be provided with adequate time and resources to evaluate teachers.

TIME AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Task Force believes that both the quantity and the quality of time spent on learning are significant. State government and school districts have an obligation to ensure that adequate learning time is provided. The Task Force recommends the following:

1. **The school year must be based on no less than 1,080 instructional hours with students in attendance.**[5] While adhering to the minimum hours requirement, school districts should have the flexibility to meet the needs of the district in terms of the length of the school day, week, and year.

2. **School facilities and staff should be used during the summer months to provide opportunities for advanced, remedial, refresher, and/or enrichment classes for students on a voluntary basis.** The state should provide incentives in the form of additional funds to underwrite the costs of such programs.

3. **The Nebraska Department of Education must ensure, as a part of its accreditation process, the effective use of time on task in the classroom.** School boards, administrators and teachers should determine how to make the most effective use of the time available in the instructional day. Such determinations should be based on the impact of technology on classroom management and administrative procedures, curriculum content, class size, learning styles, and teaching strategies to be employed or avoided. The final measure of the effective use of time should be individual student learning, and should be determined by appropriate evaluation.

4. **Careful attention must be given to class size.** For effective instruction and learning, class size must be compatible with curriculum content, the nature of the day's lesson, the age of the student, teaching methods, and learning styles.

5. **Homework should be a sound extension of the classroom learning experience.** Individual teachers should develop homework expectations and guidelines and communicate them to students and parents.

6. **Notwithstanding the importance of extracurricular activities for the development of the individual, a much better balance between such activities and academic learning time must be established.** All extracurricular activities should be scheduled to commence outside the instructional day. Exceptions may be made for district, regional, and state competition. The Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA), the various interscholastic conferences, and the local school districts should reevaluate activity schedules and make recommendations for reductions.

---

[5]This corresponds to a 180-day year rather than the current statutory requirement of 175 school days, and reflects a six-hour instructional day rather than the current five-hour minimum school day required by NDE regulation.

PUBLIC SUPPORT, FUNDING, AND GOVERNANCE

As is often stated, "Schools are only as good as communities want them to be." While for the most part parents and other community members are very supportive of local schools, continuous parental and community support and involvement in the education process are essential if any plan for promoting educational excellence is to succeed. Further, more efficient uses of tax dollars and other resources must be found.

Schools are an important part of Nebraska's communities. The facilities, equipment and professional staff available in school districts can be valuable educational resources for all of the community, not just for schoolchildren.

To ensure that improvements in education are in fact implemented, the Task Force recommends the following actions:

Public Support

1. **School boards and administrators must explore and define more effectively the role of the public schools.** In particular, the manner in which the curriculum and policies support primary goals should be clearly enunciated.[6]

2. **School boards, administrators, staff and parent groups should enlist individuals and groups in the community to express their views and become involved in the schools.** In addition, all school employees should be conscious of their role as representatives of the schools and should, therefore, help explain school procedures and programs to the public. Broad channels of communication should be established and maintained.

3. **School districts should encourage all school system personnel to participate in community activities not directly related to the school.**

4. **Cooperative efforts between business leaders and schools should be fostered to improve education by:** establishing business expectations for the educational level of beginning employees; lending employees and management experts to the schools; establishing scholarships, loans, and other forms of financial aid to reward excellence, both for students and teachers; and developing summer employment opportunities for teachers in districts which do not offer eleven-month contracts.

5. **Local school boards should work with chambers of commerce and other community organizations in searching for ways to make school facilities, equipment and other resources available to the entire community.**

Funding and Governance

6. **State aid to education should be increased to the level of 50 percent of the total cost of public education.**

---

[6]For the four primary goals identified by the Task Force, see Curriculum and Standards, p. 4.

7. **The distribution formula for state aid should include:** (a) **an incentive component** which encourages expanded curricular offerings, improved teaching, and the innovative use of technology; and (b) **an equalization component** which strives to equalize the financial resources among school districts by specifying minimum and maximum tax levies in order to achieve equality of educational opportunity for all students.

8. **To ensure that a sound and comprehensive education is available to all children in Nebraska, the state school system must be modified to place all students and property in K-12 school districts.** This change in organization should not eliminate appropriately located school buildings.[7]

9. **The Legislature should direct the State Board of Education to promulgate rules and regulations for the operation of Educational Service Units, and provide that all counties be placed in an ESU.** In order to assure the implementation of a comprehensive K-12 school system, ESUs should function to coordinate the delivery of programs and the sharing of staff among school districts.

10. **School districts must cooperate with each other and with other educational agencies and institutions in sharing facilities and other resources.**

[7] It must be understood that one school building does not make a district and that a new district generally can rely on buildings used by predecessor districts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Governor's Task Force on Excellence in Education

The Task Force on Excellence in Education was created by Nebraska Governor Robert Kerrey in June of 1983 and charged with 1) studying the current status of education in Nebraska, especially at the high school level; 2) assessing how national reports on education apply to Nebraska schools; and 3) determining the kind of education that can and should be provided for all of Nebraska's children.

The Task Force's 29 members included teachers, school administrators, school board members, State Legislators, and representatives of the business and agricultural communities. The Findings and Premises and the Recommendations of the Task Force are based on statistical data, several national and statewide reports on education, a series of Town Hall meetings conducted across the state, and the individual and collective views and conclusions of the Task Force membership.

Based on its study, the Task Force idntified 12 major findings and 41 recommendations in the areas of Curriculum and Standards, Teaching, Time and the Learning Environment, and Public Support, Funding and Governance. The Task Force presented its report to Governor Kerrey on September 30, 1983.

Findings and Premises

- Nebraska elementary and secondary schools have a clear record of success.
- Current trends indicate the need for an even better education to prepare citizens to meet the demands of the future.
- Our society requires that high school graduates have a comprehensive education.
- There is strong agreement that Nebraska schools must be dedicated to education of all children.
- Nebraska high schools generally have offerings in the core curriculum areas of English, social studies, mathematics and science consistent with those identified in the National Commission on Excellence in Education's report *A Nation at Risk.*
- In some settings there are inadequate challenges and rigor to develop students' intellectual abilities.
- A major concern regarding instruction is the limited amount of student learning time in the school day.
- There are serious obstacles to maintaining and improving the size and quality of the teacher corps.
- The current organization and character of Nebraska's educational system reveal both strengths and weaknesses for meeting the challenge of excellence in education
- To improve the quality of education, schools will need an even broader base of community support.
- Nebraskans recognize the need for excellence in education and support improvement.
- A unique opportunity to make needed changes is at hand.

Recommendations

Curriculum and Standards

The Task Force calls for creating a single, higher standard, based on curriculum improvements, for approving all schools in Nebraska. High schools should offer the following **graduation requirements:**

4 years English/language arts
4 years mathematics
4 years social studies
2 years foreign language
3 years science (including at least one each of biological and physical sciences)
4 years fine/performing arts
3 years personal health/fitness
3 years career/vocational education
2 years computer education

The Task Force also recommends the establishment of statewide **minimum graduation requirements** based upon actual student learning. Recommended graduation requirements include the following:

4 years English/language arts
3 years mathematics/computer education
3 years social studies
2 years foreign language and/or career/vocational education
2 years science (including at least one year biological and one year physical sciences)
2 years fine/performing arts
1.5 years personal health/fitness

In addition, the Task Force recommends that Nebraska postsecondary institutions continue to raise their admission standards; that school districts provide suitable offerings for gifted as well as learning-disabled students; that school work be a full-time activity for students; that students' academic achievement be recognized and rewarded; and that efforts to identify and counsel potential dropouts be intensified.

Teaching

The Task Force calls for raising standards for admission and retention in teacher training institutions; assessing the subject matter knowledge, general education knowledge, and competence for teaching of candidates for teacher certification; giving more attention to the student teaching experience; establishing financial incentives such as loans to attract the best possible persons into teaching; and utilizing available data bases to help match future teachers with areas of need.

To upgrade the continuing education of teachers, the Task Force recommends state approval of graduate education programs; development of a program to assist first-year teachers; more attention to a comprehensive professional development program for all teachers; providing sabbaticals and other leaves of absence; as well as offering improved retirement benefits.

Recognizing that salaries for teachers are too low, the Task Force recommends increasing both beginning and career salaries, providing such career ladders as ten and eleven-month contracts for teachers, and establishing a master teacher rank. The Task Force further recommends that tenure requirements be reviewed with a view to making them more vigorous; that fair and reliable procedures for the evaluation of teachers be developed; and that administrators be given adequate training in teacher evaluation.

Time and the Learning Environment

The Task Force recommends that the minimum school year be 1,080 instructional hours instead of a fixed number of days. The Task Force also calls for more effective use of the time now available, consideration of appropriate class size, homework as an extension of classroom learning experiences, and a better balance between academic learning time and extracurricular activities.

Public Support, Funding and Governance

The Task Force calls for better cooperation and communication between the schools and their communities, considerably increased state aid to education, a revised aid distribution formula to include both an incentive component and an equalization component, the structuring of the state schools so that all students and property are placed in K-12 school districts, and greater attention to the relationship and cooperation of schools with each other, Educational Service Units, and other educational agencies and institutions.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Task Force Members

Brenda Warren, Chairperson
Omaha School Board/Attorney
Omaha, Nebraska

Bob Broomfield
Business/County Superintendent
McCook, Nebraska

Randy Bruns
Chappell School Board/Agriculture
Chappell, Nebraska

Linda Crump
High School Science Teacher
Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Nebraska

Richard Finley
Superintendent
Stratton Public Schools and
Palisade Public Schools
Palisade, Nebraska

Minerva Gonzalez-Miles
Teachers College
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, Nebraska

Mary Harvey
Administrator
Omaha Public Schools
Omaha, Nebraska

John J. Hodges
Agriculture/Business
Julian, Nebraska

Senator Rod Johnson
Harvard, Nebraska

Becky Keidel
Wayne-Carroll School Board/Business
Wayne, Nebraska

Michael Kneale
President, Nebraska Association
of School Administrators
Superintendent,
Grand Island Public Schools
Grand Island, Nebraska

Jan Lindsay
Fifth Grade TAG Teacher
Norfolk Public Schools
Norfolk, Nebraska

Marcia Malone
Crete School Board/Business
Martell, Nebraska

William Nester
President
Kearney State College
Kearney, Nebraska

James O'Hanlon
Dean, Teachers College
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, Nebraska

David K. Putensen
Business
Lincoln, Nebraska

Deb Hardin Quirk
Business
Hastings, Nebraska

Mick Reavis
Gering School Board/Business
Gering, Nebraska

James Seacrest
Business
North Platte, Nebraska

Richard J. Sedlacek
Principal
North Platte Senior High School
North Platte, Nebraska

Harry Seward
Business
Lincoln, Nebraska

Boyd E. Stuhr
President, Nebraska Association
of School Boards
Bradshaw School Board/Agriculture
Bradshaw, Nebraska

Jack Taylor
Superintendent
Omaha Public Schools
Omaha, Nebraska

Ardis Tesar
Centennial School Board/Homemaker
Beaver Crossing, Nebraska

June VanderVeen
Teacher
President, Nebraska State
Education Association
Nebraska City, Nebraska

Senator Tom Vickers
Farnam, Nebraska

Gerald Whelan
Attorney
Hastings, Nebraska

John White
President
Nebraska Wesleyan University
Lincoln, Nebraska

Joe E. Lutjeharms
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
(Ex officio)
Lincoln, Nebraska

Staff

Policy Research Office
Stan Sibley
Andrew F. Cunningham

Nebraska Department of Education
Bob Beecham
Virginia Wright
Shirley Shafer
Sandy Peters, Artist

APPENDIX B

Suggested Competencies

1. "The teaching of **English** in high school should equip graduates to: (a) comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and use what they read; (b) write well-organized, effective papers; (c) listen effectively and discuss ideas intelligently; and (d) know our literary heritage and how it enhances imagination and ethical understanding, and how it relates to the customs, ideas, and values of today's life and culture." (Implementing Recommendation A-1., *A Nation at Risk*)

2. "The teaching of **mathematics** in high school should equip graduates to: (a) understand geometric and algebraic concepts; (b) understand elementary probability and statistics; (c) apply mathematics in everyday situations; and (d) estimate, approximate, measure, and test the accuracy of their calculations. In addition to the traditional sequence of studies available for college-bound students, new, equally demanding mathematics curricula need to be developed for those who do not plan to continue their formal education immediately." (Implementing Recommendation A-2., *A Nation at Risk*)

3. "The teaching of **science** in high school should provide graduates with an introduction to: (a) the concepts, laws and process of the physical and biological sciences; (b) the methods of scientific inquiry and reasoning; (c) the application of scientific knowledge to everyday life; and (d) the social and environmental implications of scientific and technological development. Science courses must be revised and updated for both the college-bound and those not intending to go to college . . .." (Implementing Recommendation A-3., *A Nation at Risk*)

4. "The teaching of **social studies** in high school should be designed to enable students to (a) fix their places and possibilities within the larger social and cultural structure; (b) understand the broad sweep of both ancient and contemporary ideas that have shaped our world; and (c) understand the fundamentals of how our economic system works and how our political system functions; and (d) grasp the difference between free and repressive societies. An understanding of each of these areas is requisite to the informed and committed exercise of citizenship in our free society." (Implementing Recommendation A-4., *A Nation at Risk*)

The social studies should particularly address and include multicultural education. "Multicultural education is education where students gain knowledge which enables them to respect and appreciate the total culture of ethnic and minority groups. . .." (From A Position Statement on Equal Educational Opportunity—Cultural Pluralism," Nebraska Department of Education.)

The teaching of social studies and foreign languages should be coordinated to give students a global perspective.

5. "Achieving proficiency in a **foreign language** ordinarily requires from 4 to 6 years of study and should, therefore, be started in the elementary grades. We believe it is desirable that students achieve such proficiency because study of a foreign language introduces students to non-English-speaking cultures, heightens awareness and comprehension of one's native tongue, and serves the Nation's needs in commerce, diplomacy, defense, and education." (Implementing Recommendation A-6., *A Nation at Risk*)

6. "The teaching of **computer science** in high school should equip graduates to: (a) understand the computer as an information, computation, and communication device; (b) use the computer in the study of the other Basics and for personal and work-related purposes; and (c) understand the world of computers, electronics, and related technologies." *(Implementing Recommendation A-5., A Nation at Risk)*

7. "The curriculum in the crucial eight grades leading to the high school years should be specifically designed to provide a sound base for study in those and later years in such areas as English language development and writing, computational and problem solving skills, science, social studies, foreign language, and the arts. These years should foster an enthusiasm for learning and the development of the individual's gifts and talents." (Implementing Recommendation A-8., *A Nation at Risk*)

In addition, the Task Force proposes the following general competencies for career/vocational education, the arts, and health and physical education.

8. The teaching of **career/vocational education** should equip all graduates to: (a) match interests, aptitudes and abilities to a variety of occupations; (b) demonstrate an appropriate attitude towards work; (c) use basic academic skills in completing work tasks; (d) utilize interpersonal and communication skills in the work setting; (e) be aware of the changing nature of the world of work; and (f) (for those directly entering the job market) use materials, machines, and tools required in the employment setting.

9. The teaching of the **fine and performing arts** should equip graduates to: (a) understand and value the power of the arts to express feeling and to add a creative dimension to the life of the individual; (b) understand and appreciate the aesthetic qualities and elements of the visual and performing arts; and (c) recognize the ways in which artistic creation has shaped and preserved the cultural environment. In addition, participation in the fine and performing arts should provide graduates with opportunities to experience and use the basic skills, media, tools and processes required to express oneself in at least one of the arts.

10. The teaching of **health education and physical education** should equip graduates to value and achieve health (physical, mental, and emotional) through: (a) competitive and team activities; (b) disease and accident prevention and control practices; (c) nutrition practices; (d) chemical abuse awareness; and (e) family life skills. Through sports and other activities, the physical education program should make a major contribution to the physical fitness, including cardiopulmonary respiratory efficiency, flexibility, and strength, of each student.

APPENDIX C

Background Information on Nebraska Schools

School Enrollment

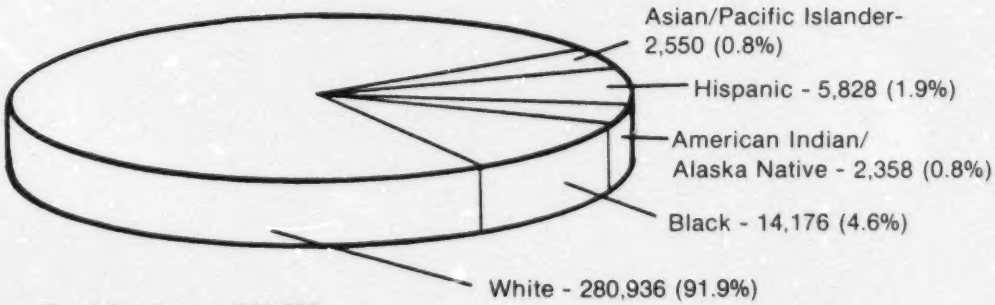
Nebraska ranks 35th among the states in terms of resident population, 36th in school aged population (ages 5-17), and eighth in number of residents over 65 years of age. The state has experienced very little increase in population over the past decade and is one of the ten most sparsely populated states, with 20.5 people per square mile.

The general trend in school enrollment has been downward. Since 1968 when enrollment peaked at about 385,000 students, Nebraska has lost nearly 80,000 students, or a 22% decline in total enrollment. Most of this decline can be attributed to the decline in birth rates. Nebraska is not unique in this regard, only seven states had increases in enrollment at both the elementary and secondary level from 1970 to 1979.

Over the last ten years, public school enrollment has been approximately 88-89% of the total enrollment in Nebraska, with nonpublic enrollment remaining relatively constant at 11-12%.

Whites comprise 91.9% of Nebraska's entire student population, as the chart illustrates. The minority student population in Nebraska (8.1%) is very small compared to the national average of 26.8%.

Racial/Ethnic Composition
1982-83 School Year



Total Students - 305,858

Graduation Requirements

In nine "basic" curriculum areas Nebraska high schools require the following for graduation:

Subject	Average Nebraska High School Requirement[8] in years	Nebraska Task Force Recommendation in years	National Commission Recommendation in years
English	3.7 (319)	4.0	4.0
Mathematics	2.0 (318)	3.0 (includes Computer Sci.)	3.0
Foreign Language	1.4 (6)	2.0 (and/or Career/ Vocational Ed.)	2.0
Science	2.0 (317)	2.0	3.0
Social Studies	2.9 (196)	3.0	3.0
Computer Science	0.7 (11)	(included with Math requirement)	0.5
Fine/Performing Arts	1.2 (107)	2.0	--
Personal Health/Fitness	1.5 (303)	1.5	——
Career/Vocational Education	1.5 (80)	2.0 (and/or Foreign Language)	——

The average Nebraska high school requires a student to be at school for about six and one-half hours per day (excluding lunch time). While 46 districts reported that they have considered extention of the school year, none have actually extended the school year.

[8] The Nebraska Department of Education surveyed 354 public and private school districts with secondary schools. Three hundred and thirty-six districts responded. The number in parenthesis indicates the number of school districts that require each subject.

State Totals
Numbers of Years Required to Graduate

FOREIGN LANGUAGE	
Number of Years	Districts Requiring
.50	1
1.00	2
2.00	3

SOCIAL SCIENCE	
Number of Years	Districts Requiring
1.00	2
1.50	1
2.00	58
2.50	21
3.00	172
3.50	12
4.00	46

SCIENCE	
Number of Years	Districts Requiring
.50	2
1.00	25
1.50	1
2.00	257
2.50	3
3.00	23

COMPUTER SCIENCE	
Number of Years	Districts Requiring
.25	1
.50	4
.75	1
1.00	5

ENGLISH	
Number of Years	Districts Requiring
2.00	4
2.50	3
3.00	70
3.50	23
4.00	210
4.50	3

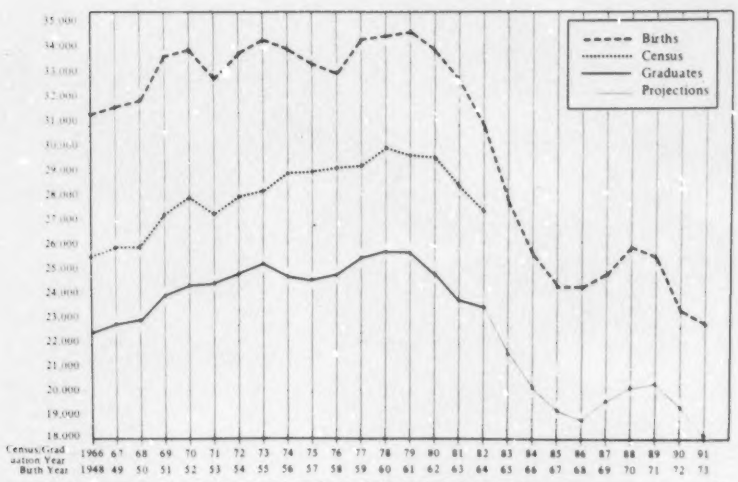
MATH	
Number of Years	Districts Required
1.00	31
1.50	2
2.00	240
2.50	8
3.00	28
4.00	3

Student Performance

Graduates from Nebraska's secondary schools in 1982 totaled 23,516. They were almost evenly divided between males and females. Nearly 90% were from public schools and slightly over 10% from nonpublic schools.

The number of graduates in any year is closely linked to the number of births which occurred 18 years earlier. Since 1961 the birth rate has been on a steady decline and the attendant graduation rate has shown a similar decline.

Birth, Census and Graduates



Number of Births from *Statistical Report of the Bureau of Vital Statistics*, Nebraska Department of Health.
18 year old census reported by County Superintendent on *Total Census Report of Each School District of the County*.
Number of Graduates reported by local school districts on the *Annual Statistical Summary*.

The 1982-83 dropout rate of 2.6% decreased from the 1978-79 rate of 3.8%. Membership in grades 7-12 decreased during the same time from 165,502 to 140,552.

Nebraska ranks high among the states in the number of high school graduates per 1,000 population. Of the 1,122,364 Nebraskans 18 years old and older, 843,409 (75%) have completed at least 4 years of high school. Of the 843,309 Nebraskans who have completed high school, 217,584 have also completed from 1 to 3 years of college, 90,477 have completed 4 years of college and 65,013 have completed 5 or more years of college.[9]

The College Entrance Examinations used in Nebraska are the American College Test (ACT) provided by the American Testing Program and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) provided by the College Board. In Nebraska and most surrounding states, the test scores, though required by most institutions of higher education, are not used to deny admission. Both tests are used for scholarship programs. The ACT is used for the Nebraska Regents Scholarship Program. This test preference was also made by the other Nebraska colleges and accounts for the decrease in SAT test usage and the increase in ACT test usage.

The total number of test administrations (ACT and SAT combined) has been continuously increasing for the past five years despite a slight decline in the number of high school graduates.

[9] *Census of Population and Housing, 1980:* Summary Tape File 3A, Microfiche (Nebraska) [42A and 42C]/prepared by Bureau of the Census, Washington.

Nebraska students are performing well above the national average on both the ACT and SAT. In the school year 1981-82 Nebraska students had an average composite score on the ACT of 19.9 or 1.5 points above the national average of 18.4. (The range on the ACT is from 0 to 36.) The average score of Nebraska students on the SAT Verbal was 493 points—67 points above the national average of 426. Nebraska students had an average of 552 points on the SAT Math which is 85 points above the national average of 467. (SAT scores range from 200 to 800 for a span of 600 points.)

Nebraska and national student average scores on both the ACT and SAT for the past nine years are presented below.

While the national SAT Math and Verbal scores have decreased since 1973, Nebraska scores have increased. Nebraska performance on the ACT, however, seems to parallel the national performance but at a higher level.

SAT TREND DATA

COLLEGE BOUND SENIORS
NEBRASKA AND NATIONAL

	VERBAL		MATH		CANDIDATES	
	Nebraska	National	Nebraska	National	Nebraska	National
1972-73	448	445	498	481	9,515	1,014,853
1973-74	454	444	506	480	9,153	985,115
1974-75	459	434	507	472	3,150	996,428
1975-76	466	431	518	472	2,586	999,829
1976-77	476	429	533	470	1,886	979,344
1977-78	484	429	538	468	1,529	989,307
1978-79	487	427	538	467	1,588	991,765
1979-80	484	424	539	466	1,550	991,056
1980-81	489	424	537	466	1,409	994,333
1981-82	493	426	552	467	1,388	988,680

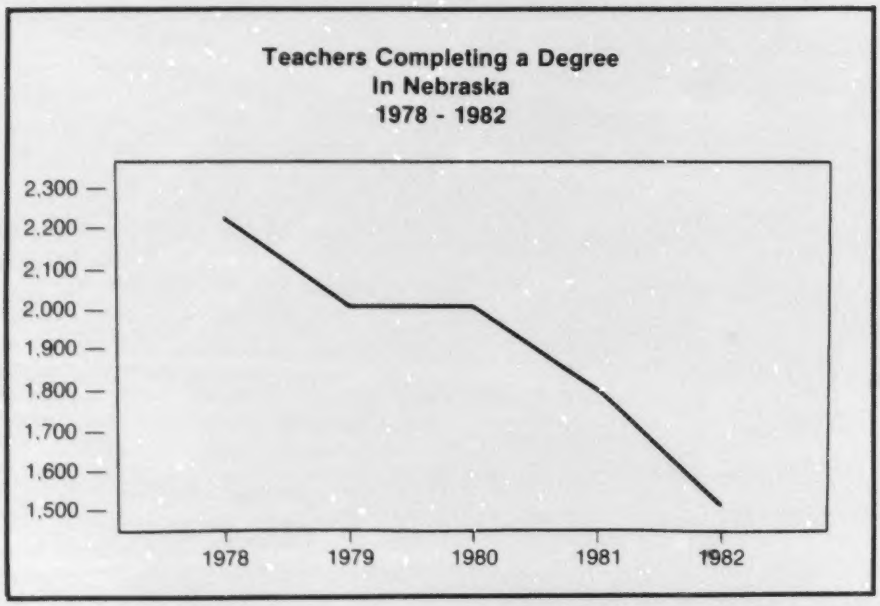
ACT TREND DATA

COLLEGE BOUND STUDENTS

	Composite Score		N-Count	N-Count
	Nebraska	National	Nebraska	National
1972-73	20.5	18.9	6,176	
1973-74	20.7	18.9	6,827	
1974-75	20.5	18.6	12,207	
1975-76	20.0	18.3	12,506	
1976-77	20.1	18.6	15,116	743,560
1977-78	20.2	18.5	15,973	769,770
1978-79	20.1	18.5	16,857	780,210
1979-80	20.0	18.5	16,898	822,200
1980-81	20.0	18.5	17,356	835,760
1981-82	19.9	18.4	17,420	804,520

Teachers

The number of persons completing requirements for teaching degrees in Nebraska postsecondary institutions has been declining in recent years. For instance, in 1978 over 2,200 teachers completed degrees in Nebraska colleges and universities. In 1982, the number dropped to 1,586. This decrease parallels the decline in the number of classroom teachers. In 1982-83 there were 5% fewer teacher Full-Time-Equivalents (FTE) than in 1979-80. However, due to declining enrollments in Nebraska schools, the ratio of teachers to students has remained roughly constant.



For the 1982-83 school year, the estimated national average annual salary for public elementary and secondary teachers was $18,409.[10] Nebraska's average teacher salary for the 1981-82 school year was $17,187.

In June, 1983, the Nebraska Department of Education conducted a survey of 354 Nebraska public school districts offering elementary and secondary grades. The results indicated:

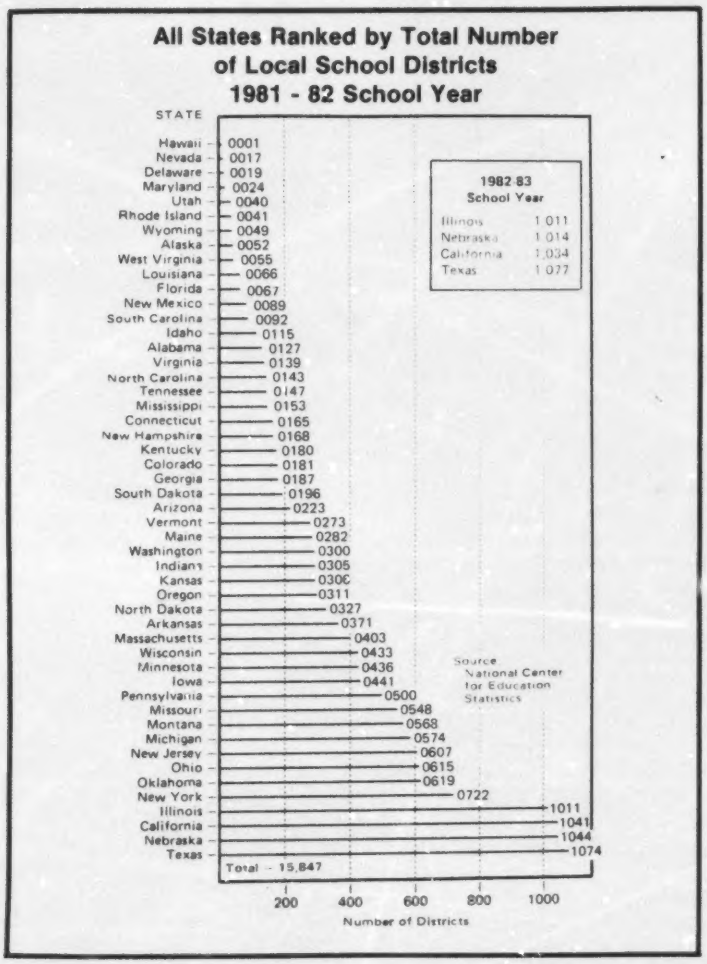
- Only a small percentage of Nebraska high schools have considered extended teacher contracts. Of the 336 respondents 303 have **not** considered lengthening teacher contracts. Some extended contracts are in effect, however, and a few more district officials think their boards might be willing to extend teacher contracts.
- One hundred districts indicated that they use community resource persons to supplement the teaching of math and science courses.
- Nearly one third (99 districts) indicated they had a program that allowed some experienced teachers to help less experienced teachers.

[10] *Ranking of the States, 1983*, National Education Association, p. 25.

School Organization

During the 1919-1920 school year Nebraska's 93 counties had 7,264 school districts. Due to consolidations and declining enrollments, the number of school districts has gradually decreased. The number of districts is expected to drop below 1,000 in the 1983-84 school year.

Nebraska ranks third highest in the number of school districts compared to all other states. Only Texas and California rank higher, and Illinois, with 1,011 districts (1982-83 school year), closely follows Nebraska.



By comparison, however, Nebraska has only a fraction as many students as Texas, California and Illinois:[11]

California — 4,068,000
Texas — 2,923,000
Illinois — 1,924,000
Nebraska — 272,000

[11] *Digest of Statistics 1982*, Student enrollments for 1982-83, National Center for Education Statistics.

There are six classes of public school districts in Nebraska. The classifications are based on State Law and are determined by grade structure and total district population. **Class I** school districts provide education for students in grades K-8 (elementary) only. **Class VI** districts provide education for students in grades 7-12 or 9-12 (secondary) only. All other classes of districts provide education for students in grades K-12 and are identified according to district population. **Class II** districts have less than 1,000 inhabitants, **Class III** districts range in population between 1,000 and 100,000, **Class IV** between 100,000 and 200,000 and **Class V** has in excess of 200,000 inhabitants.

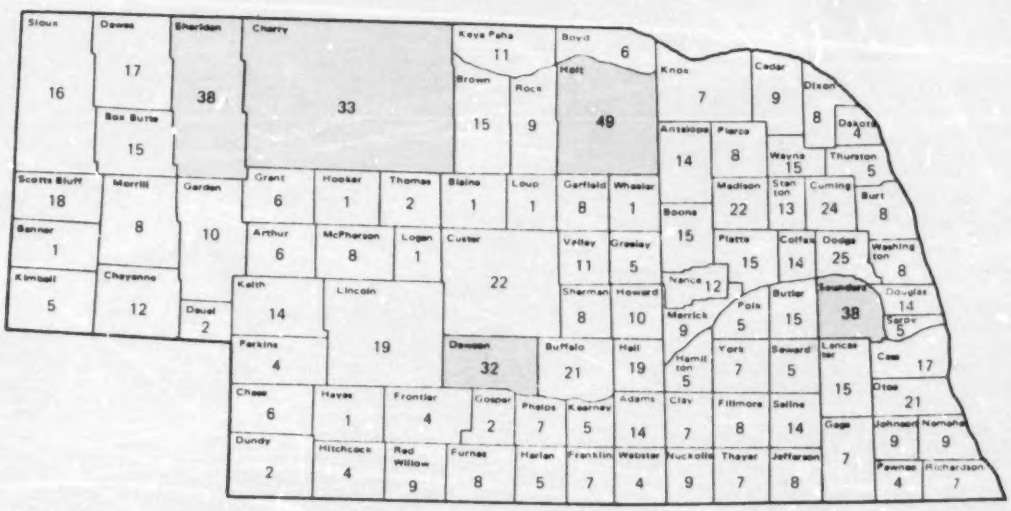
The class breakdown of the 1,014 Nebraska school districts during the 1982-83 school year was:

Class I districts — 702
Class II districts — 68
Class III districts— 219
Class IV districts— 1 (Lincoln)
Class V districts — 1 (Omaha)
Class VI districts— 23

Of the 702 **Class I** districts, 46 contracted their students to another school district or did not hold school for some other reason.

The map and table below show the total number of districts in each county during the 1982-83 school year. Five counties (shaded) had over 30 school districts: Cherry 33, Dawson 32, Holt 49, Saunders 38, and Sheridan 38. Six additional counties had more than 20 school districts.

County Distribution of School Districts in Nebraska
1982 - 83 School Year



Public School Districts in Nebraska by County and Class of District
1982 - 83 School Year

	Class I Districts				K-12 Districts						
	Operating	Contracting	Not Op./Contr	Total Class I Districts	Class II Dist.	Class III Dist.	Class IV Dist.	Class V Dist.	Total K-12 Districts	Class VI Districts	Total School Districts
Adams	10	–	–	10	1	2	–	–	3	1	14
Antelope	9	1	–	10	2	2	–	–	4	–	14
Arthur	5	–	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	1	6
Banner	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	1
Blaine	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	1
Boone	10	1	–	11	1	3	–	–	4	–	15
Box Butte	11	1	1	13	–	2	–	–	2	–	15
Boyd	2	–	–	2	2	2	–	–	4	–	6
Brown	14	–	–	14	–	1	–	–	1	–	15
Buffalo	14	–	–	14	1	6	–	–	7	–	21
Burt	3	1	–	4	1	3	–	–	4	–	8
Butler	10	1	1	12	1	2	–	–	3	–	15
Cass	11	–	–	11	1	5	–	–	6	–	17
Cedar	3	1	–	4	–	5	–	–	5	–	9
Chase	4	–	–	4	–	1	–	–	1	1	6
Cherry	30	1	–	31	1	–	–	–	1	1	33
Cheyenne	8	–	–	8	1	3	–	–	4	–	12
Clay	2	–	–	2	1	4	–	–	5	–	7
Colfax	9	1	–	10	–	3	–	–	3	1	14
Cuming	16	4	–	20	–	4	–	–	4	–	24
Custer	16	–	–	16	–	6	–	–	6	–	22
Dakota	2	–	–	2	–	2	–	–	2	–	4
Dawes	14	1	–	15	–	2	–	–	2	–	17
Dawson	20	6	–	26	1	5	–	–	6	–	32
Deuel	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	2	–	2
Dixon	4	–	–	4	–	4	–	–	4	–	8
Dodge	18	1	–	19	1	3	–	–	4	2	25
Douglas	6	–	–	6	–	7	–	1	8	–	14
Dundy	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	2	–	2
Fillmore	3	–	–	3	1	4	–	–	5	–	8
Franklin	4	–	–	4	2	1	–	–	3	–	7
Frontier	–	1	–	1	1	2	–	–	3	–	4
Furnas	1	1	–	2	2	4	–	–	6	–	8
Gage	2	–	–	2	1	4	–	–	5	–	7
Garden	7	1	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	2	10
Garfield	7	–	–	7	–	–	–	–	–	1	8
Gosper	1	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	1	–	2
Grant	5	–	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	1	6
Greeley	1	–	–	1	2	2	–	–	4	–	5
Hall	13	2	–	15	–	2	–	–	2	2	19
Hamilton	–	–	–	–	3	2	–	–	5	–	5
Harlan	2	–	–	2	1	2	–	–	3	–	5
Hayes	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	1
Hitchcock	–	–	–	–	2	2	–	–	4	–	4
Holt	42	2	–	44	2	2	–	–	4	1	49
Hooker	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	1
Howard	7	–	–	7	1	2	–	–	3	–	10
Jefferson	4	–	–	4	1	3	–	–	4	–	8
Johnson	5	–	–	5	1	3	–	–	4	–	9
Kearney	2	–	–	2	–	3	–	–	3	–	5
Keith	10	1	–	11	1	2	–	–	3	–	14
Keya Paha	9	1	–	10	–	–	–	–	–	1	11
Kimball	2	1	–	3	1	–	–	–	1	1	5
Knox	–	–	–	–	1	6	–	–	7	–	7
Lancaster	10	–	–	10	–	4	1	–	5	–	15
Lincoln	11	2	–	13	3	3	–	–	6	–	19
Logan	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	1
Loup	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	–	1
Madison	17	–	–	17	–	5	–	–	5	–	22
McPherson	6	1	–	7	–	–	–	–	–	1	8
Merrick	5	–	–	5	2	2	–	–	4	–	9
Morrill	5	1	–	6	–	2	–	–	2	–	8
Nance	10	–	–	10	–	2	–	–	2	–	12
Nemaha	7	–	–	7	–	2	–	–	2	–	9
Nuckolls	5	1	–	6	–	3	–	–	3	–	9
Otoe	17	–	–	17	1	3	–	–	4	–	21
Pawnee	1	–	–	1	2	1	–	–	3	–	4
Perkins	1	–	–	1	2	–	–	–	2	1	4
Phelps	4	–	–	4	1	2	–	–	3	–	7
Pierce	5	–	–	5	–	3	–	–	3	–	8
Platte	11	–	–	11	1	2	–	–	3	1	15
Polk	1	–	–	1	–	4	–	–	4	–	5
Red Willow	5	–	–	5	2	2	–	–	4	–	9
Richardson	2	1	–	3	–	4	–	–	4	–	7
Rock	7	1	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	1	9
Saline	10	–	–	10	–	4	–	–	4	–	14
Sarpy	1	–	–	1	–	4	–	–	4	–	5
Saunders	31	1	–	32	2	4	–	–	6	–	38
Scotts Bluff	11	–	–	11	1	6	–	–	7	–	18
Seward	2	–	–	2	–	3	–	–	3	–	5
Sheridan	31	4	–	35	–	2	–	–	2	1	38
Sherman	5	1	–	6	1	1	–	–	2	–	8
Sioux	14	–	1	15	–	–	–	–	–	1	16
Stanton	12	–	–	12	–	1	–	–	1	–	13
Thayer	2	–	–	2	2	3	–	–	5	–	7
Thomas	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	2
Thurston	1	–	–	1	–	4	–	–	4	–	5
Valley	9	–	–	9	1	1	–	–	2	–	11
Washington	5	–	–	5	–	3	–	–	3	–	8
Wayne	12	–	–	12	–	3	–	–	3	–	15
Webster	–	–	–	–	2	2	–	–	4	–	4
Wheeler	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	1
York	1	–	–	1	4	2	–	–	6	–	7
Final Totals	556	43	3	702	68	219	1	1	289	23	1,014

Enrollment in the public school districts varies widely by class of district. Two hundred of the Class I school districts educated 10 to 19 students each during the last school year. Two school districts, Lincoln (Class VI) and Omaha (Class V), educated over 29,000 and 42,000 students, respectively.

As the charts below illustrate, Class III school districts comprise 21.6% of the school districts but educate 62.9% of Nebraska's students. The Class I school districts, which represent over two-thirds of all school districts, educate only 6.9% of the public school population.

Number of Public School Districts by Enrollment Range in each Class of District
1982 - 83 School Year

CLASS I

No. of Students	No. of Districts
1 – 2	9
3 – 4	34
5 – 6	79
7 – 8	66
9	36
10 – 19	200
20 – 29	83
30 – 39	47
40 – 49	32
50 – 74	31
75 – 99	11
100 – 199	18
200 – 299	3
300 – 499	4
500 – 699	3

Forty six Class I districts are contracting all their students or not holding session for other reasons.

CLASS II

No. of Students	No. of Districts
25 – 49	1
50 – 99	13
100 – 149	26
150 – 199	21
200 – 249	7

CLASS III

No. of Students	No. of Districts
100 – 199	24
200 – 299	61
300 – 399	41
400 – 499	20
500 – 599	16
600 – 699	6
700 – 799	6
800 – 899	5
900 – 999	5
1000 – 1999	19
2000 & Over	16

CLASS IV

Lincoln is the only Class IV district and has an enrollment of 24,647.

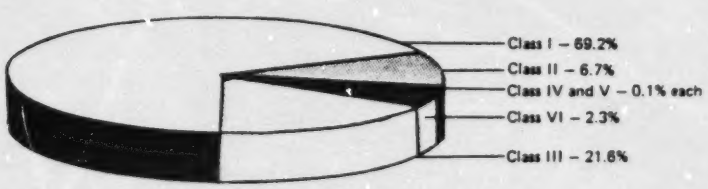
CLASS V

Omaha is the only Class V district and has an enrollment of 42,270.

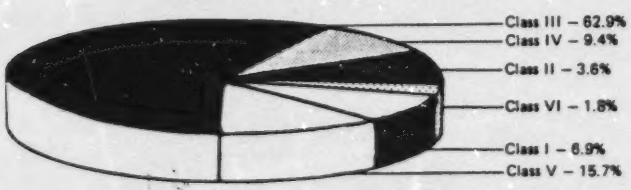
CLASS VI

No. of Students	No. of Districts
Under 49	3
50 – 99	4
100 – 149	2
150 – 199	2
200 – 249	4
250 – 299	2
300 – 349	2
350 – 399	3
400 & Over	1

Number of Nebraska Public School Districts by Class of District
1982 - 83 School Year



Enrollment in Nebraska Public School Districts by Class of District
1982 - 83 School Year



School Finances

The most recent available data show that local school district revenue comes from four main sources:[12]

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82
Federal	7.34%	7.53%	6.40%
State	24.37%	30.19%	29.41%
Local	66.18%	59.99%	62.59%
Non-Revenue receipts	2.11%	2.29%	1.60%

All Federal money comes from direct and state administered grants. State sources include the state aid formula, special education programs and transportation, drivers education, wards of the court, state apportionment (from sale and/or lease of school land), in-lieu-of school land tax, insurance premium tax, prorata motor vehicle tax, and homestead exemptions. In addition to local taxes, local revenues include county fines and license fees and non-resident high school tuition. Non-revenue receipts may be loans, insurance adjustments, or other revenue not included in another category.

The state aid formula comprises the primary source of state money for public school districts. In the 1981-82 and 1982-83 school years, $133,716,100 was distributed to schools. The state aid formula has the following three sections:

Foundation Aid - Based on resident student enrollment, $96,476,100 was distributed in each of the last two school years.

Incentive Aid - This portion of the state aid formula rewards districts for having instructional staff with masters or doctors degrees. During each of the last two years, $3,450,668 was distributed in incentive aid.

Equalization - The financial status of the school district determines the amount of money it will receive in equalization. In 1981-82 and 1982-83, $33,781,335 was distributed.

Contary to the national tendency to rely heaviiy on state financing of public education, Nebraska obtains about 60% of its public school financing from local resources (primarily property taxation). Only New Hampshire, reports more local funding than Nebraska.

By relying heavily on property taxation Nebraska allows those most directly affected by the quality of education in their community to have a very strong voice in the direction of their district's schools. By the same token, the relatively limited reliance on state sources means the influence exercised by Nebraska's citizens as a whole, through their state government, over education is less than is typically observed in most other states.

Data on expenditures of state funds for education place Nebraska, with $678 spent per capita for education in 1980-82, slightly above the national average of $643. This amount represented 6.5% of Nebraska's per-capita personal income. The average cost of educating a Nebraska public school student in 1981-82 was $2,471. This was close to the national average of $2,721 and reflects a 200% increase in cost over the last ten years.

---

[12]Annual Financial Reports 1980, 1981, 1982, Nebraska Department of Education.

APPENDIX D

For Further Reading

Adler, Mortimer J. *The Paideia Proposal An Educational Manifesto* New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1982.

Alm, Kent et al. "A Report to The Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Post-secondary Education." *Study of Teacher Education In Nebraska*. NE: Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Post Secondary Education, 1981.

Berman, Weiler Associates. "Improving Student Performance in California." *Recommendations for the California Roundtable*. California: Berman, Weiler Associates, 1982.

Blakeslee, Thomas R. *The Right Brain A New Understanding of the Unconscious Mind and its Creative Power*, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1980.

Boyer, Ernest L. *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1983.

The College Board. "What Students Need to Know and Be Able To Do." *Academic Preparation for College*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1983.

Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, "National Debate Topic for High Schools 1981-82 Pursuant to PL-88-246." *How Can the U.S. Elementary and Secondary Education Systems Best Be Improved?*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1981.

Fowler, Steve. A Report of The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. NE: Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee, December, 1982.

Gagne, R. M. *Conditions of Learning*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970.

Goodlad, John I. *A Place Called School*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1983.

Governor's Task Force on Exceilence in Education. *Summary of Questionnaire Responses*, Unpublished manuscript. Lincoln, Nebraska 1983.

Governor's Task Force on Excellence in Education. *Transcript of Town Hall Meetings*, unpublished manuscripts, Lincoln, Nebraska 1983.

Henry, James F. *Basic Skills in the U.S. Work Force*. New York: Center for Public Resources, 1983.

Henry, Thomas, John Creswell, and Humphrey E. *Indicators of Excellence In Public Education*. NE: undated.

Klausmeier, H. J., and Ripple, R. E. *Learning and Human Abilities*. 3rd. ed., New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

Levin, Henry M., and Russell W. Rumberger "The Educational Implications of High Technology." *Project Report No. 83-A4* Stanford University: 1983.

Naisbitt, John. *Megatrends*, New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1982

The National Commission on Excellence in Education. *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative For Educational Reform*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983.

National Education Association. *Rankings of the States, 1983* Washington, D.C., 1983.

National Science Foundation. "A plan of action for improving mathematics, science, and technology education for all American elementary and secondary students so that their achievement is the best in the World by 1995." *Educating Americans For The 21st Century*. Washington, D.C. National Science Foundation, 1983.

Nebraska Coordinating Commission. "A Report of the Teacher Education Ad-Hoc Committee of the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education." *Teacher Education In Nebraska*. NE: Nebraska Coordinating Commission, 1983.

Nebraska Council on Teacher Education. *Policies and Criteria for the Approval of Teacher Education Programs and Institutions in Nebraska*. NE: Nebraska Council on Teacher Education, Approved 1981.

Nebraska Department of Education *A Position Statement on Equal Educational Opportunity*. NE: NDE, March 11, 1977.

Nebraska Department of Education "Chapter 14." *Regulations and Procedures For Approving The Continued Legal Operation of All Schools and The Opening of New Schools*. Title 92, 1976.

Nebraska Department of Education. "Chapter 15 (Formerly NDE Rule 11)." *Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Public and Non-Public Schools*. Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, 1979.

Nebraska Department of Education. "Chapter 21." Regulations for the *Issuance of Certificates and Permits To Teach, Counsel, Supervise, and Administer in Nebraska Schools*. Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, 1977.

Nebraska Department of Education. *Fact Sheet 3: Statistics and Facts About Nebraska Schools: 1982-83 Secondary School Dropouts*, Lincoln, Nebraska, October 5, 1983.

Nebraska Department of Education. *Fact Sheet 6: Statistics and Facts About Nebraska Schools: A Statistical Report of School Districts in Nebraska*, Lincoln, Nebraska, January 1983.

Nebraska Department of Education. *Fact Sheet 10: Statistics and Facts About Nebraska Schools: Nebraska High School Graduates*, Lincoln, Nebraska, May 10, 1983.

Nebraska Department of Education. *Statistics and Facts About Nebraska Schools* Lincoln, Nebraska 1982-83.

Nebraska Educational Policies Commission. *Report of the Nebraska Educational Policies Commission ("Thone Commission")*. Nebraska Governor's Office, December, 1982.

The Nebraska State Education Association Working Paper *The Nebraska Professional Teacher Plan*, NE: NSEA, Adopted September 10, 1983.

Simon, Paul. *The Tongue-Tied American Confronting the Foreign Language Crisis*, New York: Continuum, 1980.

The Twentieth Century Fund. *Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy* New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1983.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *1980 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics - Nebraska*, Washington, D.C., July 1982.

U.S. Education Commission. "A Comprehensive Plan to Improve Our Nation's Schools." *Action for Excellence*. U.S. Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983.

Whitman, Gloria. "Response to the National Crisis In Education: Governors' Actions To Promote Education For Economic Strength." *Reaction Draft*. NE: The Council of State Planning Agencies, 1983.